

March 4, 2021

Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom, ranking members Kissel and Fishbein and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Michael Eanes, I am from Litchfield and a volunteer with CT Against Gun Violence. I am testifying in favor of HB-6355, An Act Concerning Risk Protection Orders.

I am a retired career educational administrator having worked with students from ages 1 – 18 and their parents, teachers, social workers and other support staff for over 40 years. If I have learned nothing else in my career in education, it is that prevention is always better than dealing with the aftermath of incidents that could have been prevented. Whether it is classroom discipline or more serious home, school, and street situations, we always have more success if we are proactive on the front end.

In the case of this bill, it involves removing access to guns from those who may hurt themselves or others, often in an impulsive manner. While I do not own a gun, I do say to my friends that do, we are not interested in taking your guns away, only is limiting access from those who are at risk of not acting responsibly.

The provisions of this bill only seek to do that. They have been proven successful in other states and surely Connecticut as a gun violence prevention leader should strengthen our position where we are weaker than others.

As an educator, I have spent countless hours working with students, teachers and parents on the issue of gun violence and prevention. If you think it is hard talking with adults about these subjects, try talking with a fifth-grade class. It was fifth graders who reminded me that we now have more lockdown drills than fire or earthquake drills (I was in California for a year).

I ask that you favorably report HB-6355 out of committee so that the General Assembly can vote to strengthen our Extreme Risk Protection law so that it works harder to prevent firearm suicide and homicide.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Michael Eanes

Litchfield